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SUBJECT: ESTONIA: 2006 TIP REPORT DEMARCHE DELIVERED
REF: STATE 86133

¶1. (U) On June 5 we delivered reftel points informing the GOE of the release of the 2006 TIP Report and Estonia's Tier 2 status to Mai Hion, MFA Director for Human Rights, and Karen Tikenberg, MFA TIP Desk Officer. The Estonians were pleased to hear that the Report acknowledged progress the GOE has made in combating TIP, principally in regards to the National Action Plan (NAP). Hion said that the GOE's main TIP priority in the short and mid-term is successful NAP implementation.

¶2. (U) In response to probing, Hion said that regional cooperation on TIP remains strong. Information-sharing among regional law enforcement officials has aided in the investigation and prosecution of a number of trafficking rings and gangs, including most recently successful raids and prosecutions in Finland. Estonia is also actively seeking to work more closely with Russia. On June 1 in Moscow a regional Roundtable Forum on trafficking was organized by the Estonian Ministry of Social Affairs, the Nordic-Baltic Task Force, and Russian NGOs which brought together government officials, law enforcement, and NGOs. Tikenberg said that law enforcement officials found the roundtable useful in sharing best practices and common challenges.

¶3. (U) Asked whether the GOE intended to introduce trafficking-specific legislation to help in the fight TIP, Hion said the Ministry of Justice had identified 15 different articles in Estonian law that could be brought to bear in trafficking cases. Going forward, the MoJ would analyze the effectiveness of current legislation and then make recommendations on required amendments or additions.

¶4. (U) In response to reftel recommendation that the GOE expand public awareness campaigns to reduce trafficking demand, Hion said the GOE had taken a number of steps to inform the Estonian traveling public about the dangers of trafficking, including through brochures distributed at the airport. However she acknowledged that more could be done to inform foreign tourists coming into Estonia about trafficking and the sex industry.

¶5. (SBU) Comment: We found Hion and Tikenberg to be focused on the substance of the fight against trafficking, rather than on the nuances of tier classification and cross-country comparisons. This is a positive sign and, we believe, one that reflects the increasing sensitization of GOE officials to the need for action in fighting TIP on multiple fronts.

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